

# ***Grace for the Broken – Discussion Guide***

## ***Witnessing Faith to those Rebuilding from Trauma***



*This general discussion guide is written for individual Christians, church groups, and others who are exploring faith. The questions invite thoughtful conversation around how the story of **Grace for the Broken** allows readers to understand what is helpful and unhelpful for those who have experienced harm or trauma and are sitting on the fringe of the Christian faith.*

### **1. Faith and discernment**

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Eve describes Hope's instincts gained through her painful past as "tools, not wounds." Why is this pastoral wisdom?
- How might this attitude show respect to those who are healing? Is respect an important part of witnessing to those on the fringe of faith?
- How does the story show that God can use past pain to develop wisdom?
- Ethan uses language that *sounds wise* but leads some faithful believers away from truth. How can we be discerning to listen out for language that sounds wise or spiritual but is not?
- When might it be the wrong time to speak about faith, even if what you're saying is true?
- What cues in the story help you to recognise people's readiness for a faith conversation?

### **2. Faith and safety**

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- In the book, Eve says, "Sometimes God whispers warnings long before people do." How can people determine the difference between trauma responses and spiritual discernment?
- Why might someone struggle to hear about God if they don't feel safe with people?
- How do Tom and Eve's actions shape trust before they offer any words of spiritual guidance?

### 3. Personal autonomy as part of a faith journey

#### *Discussion Questions:*

- What is important about:
  - Jesse having the option to accept or reject Ruby and Joe's apologies?
  - Ruby choosing her own relationship boundaries?
  - Alek deciding to visit Keith without any pressure?
- How do these decisions open a pathway forward to trusting in God?
- How does this autonomy challenge the idea of passive faith?
- Eve says, "God performs miracles, but ... He also lets people make their own choices." Why is this an important balance?
- Why is it important to say that although Nova is beginning to trust God, she does not need to pray for Evan?
- How can spiritual expectations we place on others exploring faith sometimes become burdens rather than support?

### 4. Truth-telling as faith in action

#### *Discussion Questions:*

- Jesse says redemption is "telling the truth, even when you're not believed." How does this reflect a deeper understanding of faith?
- Nova tells Lily: "People can choose to be kind. And safe." Why is this an important foundation to voice in the novel before introducing bigger spiritual ideas about trust?
- What might have been the impact if Nova had responded differently to Lily's question?

### 5. When Christians get it wrong

#### *Discussion Questions:*

- Ruby acts unjustly toward Jesse. Why is it important that this is included in the story?
- How does Joe facing his pride and poor choices strengthen his character witness?
- How does Joe's repentance make a difference to Jesse?
- How does the story show that people of faith can unintentionally participate in harm?
- What makes a difference in their witness being void or restored after they have harmed others?

- Why is Ruby's genuine repentance such a powerful part of Jesse's final restoration?

## 6. Forgiveness

*Grace for the Broken* resists the temptation to show cheap forgiveness. Grace is costly.

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- What does Ruby need to understand before she can truly ask for forgiveness?
- Can you forgive someone without restoring the relationship?
- What makes it so difficult for Jesse to forgive? How does he separate those who've harmed him into different groups?
- Why is 'quick forgiveness' potentially harmful? Is it wise to trust someone again who has deliberately harmed you?
- In faith environments, why does forgiveness sometimes get mentioned before safety? How can this attitude change?

## 7. The Credibility of Faith Witnesses

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Which characters make faith feel:
  - Safe?
  - Trustworthy?
  - Worth exploring?
- What specifically do they do that builds this credibility?
- Where do characters like Joe, Craig, and Ruby demonstrate these qualities of faith without using any spiritual words:
  - Kindness
  - Gentleness
  - Respect
- How can this be impactful in witnessing?

## 8. Faith expressed through care

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- In the novel where do we see faith lived out through:
  - Presence?

- Listening?
- Practical support?
- Why might this be more meaningful than spiritual words for someone recovering from harm?
- Ruby speaks to Mia about grace in a quiet, non-forceful way. What makes her approach effective?
- How is this different from “preaching at” someone?
- What does safety have to do with credibility in sharing faith?

## 9. Repairing distorted views of God

### *Discussion Questions:*

- For someone who has lived through harm, how might authority figures (like pastors) shape their view of God?
- In what ways can leaders of faith organisations compound the harm of those who have experienced trauma?
- What do Tom and Eve do that *corrects* these potential distortions?
- For someone with church trauma, what kinds of words or behaviours did the novel show that might rebuild trust?
- What words or actions might unintentionally cause further harm?

## 10. Timing and readiness

### *Discussion Questions:*

- How can you tell when someone might be open to a spiritual conversation?
- What happens when people rush that process?
- What considerations are important in sharing faith in a way that prioritises the other person’s wellbeing?
- How can we ensure our desire to “witness” doesn’t override someone’s need for safety?
- Who models authenticity in *Grace for the Broken* in the way that they communicate about faith?

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**Closing Reflection:** What is one way I can put wisdom into practice about sharing faith that was demonstrated in this novel?